



MICHIGAN
COMPASSION

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To: State of Michigan
House of Representatives
House Judiciary Committee
The Honorable Representative Kevin Cotter, Chair

From: Michigan Compassion

Re: House Bills 4271, 5104, and Senate Bill 660

We are prompted to write to the House Judiciary Committee in response to concern expressed during our outreach meetings by the public, our members and our Board of Directors in relation to the House and Senate Bills being considered by the Judiciary Committee: HB 4271, HB 5104, and SB 660.

Michigan Compassion is a 501(c)(3) exempt organization registered with the State of Michigan Office of Attorney General Charitable Trust Division. The organization received its federal exemption in 2011 and is the first nonprofit in the state of Michigan and only one of four in the United States approved as a medical marijuana patient advocacy organization. Michigan Compassion's mission is that we strive to increase awareness and understanding through education, information and advocacy of all of the medical benefits and healing properties of cannabis. As a federal nonprofit Michigan Compassion is prohibited from distributing medical marijuana, facilitating the exchange of medical marijuana, or educating on the cultivation of medical marijuana.

The primary tools employed to accomplish our Mission are education and public outreach. It is the goal of Michigan Compassion's Board to position the organization as the national educational authority on medical marijuana. Although Michigan Compassion is a young organization, we have achieved some significant milestones. In 2013 Michigan Compassion was invited and accepted into the Southeastern Michigan Combined Federated Campaign and we have had the opportunity to attend the CFC Fairs at many local federal agency offices. The organization also received a substantial grant from Google Corporation to run our educational campaign, "Cannabis Awareness Project." We are also very proud of the state-wide distribution of our publication "Guide to Understanding the Michigan Medical Marijuana Act."

Michigan Compassion has always maintained a strong commitment to public outreach and has had more opportunities to speak with the public than any other cannabis organization in the State. We have recently expanded our outreach state-wide and will be holding public meetings in many local communities in 2014. Our outreach has also included members of the medical marijuana community but also includes presentations to medical professionals, state legislators, and municipal governments.

"WE MUST INCREASE AWARENESS TO INCREASE ACCEPTANCE"

501(C)3 NON-PROFIT PUBLIC CHARITY. ALL DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

We are writing you to remind you that the citizen passed initiative known as the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act must remain intact as new legislation is developed to address the rising tide of state and national marijuana issues including commercialization and recreational use. The Act is a medical use law and that fact has been trampled and ignored under the backlash of local and state government. None-the-less, the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act is Michigan Law.

The Act has already experienced revisions by the State House of Representatives in order to address perceived weaknesses in the Act. Michigan Compassion respects the power granted by the Michigan Constitution to allow the State Legislator to amend Law as deemed necessary. In the 2012 Omnibus Bills on Medical Marihuana, we acknowledge, respect and applaud the extensive deliberative and fact finding process the Judiciary Committee undertook before introducing the Omnibus Bills to the House. However, the Act has also undergone extensive and punitive interpretations by State Courts. While the Courts have the power to create case law, Michigan Compassion does not acknowledge the Court's power to create new law or law from nothing as in the case of the Court of Appeals ruling that HB 5104 is attempting to reverse.

In regard to House Bills 4271, 5014 and Senate Bill 660, it is our opinion drawn from 5 years of working directly with the public and immersion in state and national medical marijuana issues. We ask that our professional, unbiased and uncompensated opinion is based on the concerns of your constituents and not campaign dollars.

HB 4271

House Bill 4271 is necessary but should be amended to be statewide instead of by jurisdiction. The Michigan Medical Marijuana Act is already too complicated for many people to understand. What is allowable in one jurisdiction may not be in another. This unknowingly placing our citizens in a volatile situation that could have them facing jail time.

Michigan Compassion believes it is necessary for patients to have options other than growing for themselves or finding a Caregiver. There are many circumstances where a patient would need to acquire cannabis from someone else, such as an unexpected loss of their Caregiver, poor health or hospitalization. HB 4271 would allow them to do that in a safe, professional setting with laboratory tested cannabis.

HB 5104

It is the opinion of Michigan Compassion that the Michigan Court of Appeals made an erroneous decision when they prohibited protection for extraction and concentrated forms of medical marijuana. This ruling has been of the highest concern to Michigan Compassion especially in light of state law enforcement's immediate enforcement action following the ruling which has created an unacceptably volatile situation for registered patients. From our public outreach to cancer centers we have learned that no bona fide physician, as defined by HB 4851, would advocate smoking as an appropriate method of ingestion. The Judiciary Committee has also heard extensive testimony to the fact that preparation and use of concentrated forms of marijuana is common yet took no action to correct Section 3(k) of the Act.

House Bill 5104 is the only new legislation introduced that is truly intended for the sick and dying and embraces the medical use of marijuana and spirit of the Act.

SB 660

Despite its meteoric move through the Michigan Senate, SB 660 should be considered dead on arrival or, at a minimum, tabled for future legislative sessions. To quote Representative Michael Callton, who stated on November 17th, 2013, at a public event hosted by Michigan Compassion, "HB660 is a waste of time as it relies on the Federal rescheduling of Cannabis from a schedule one (1) to a two (2) and I do not see this happening anytime soon." Michigan Compassion agrees with Representative Callton's assessment. SB 660 it is a waste of the House Judiciary Committee's time.

If SB 660 should advance to the House, we ask that all contracts with commercial medical marijuana businesses and the State of Michigan give preferential consideration to small, minority and women owned businesses; and that they be guaranteed 20% of all contracts requested by the state for medical marijuana services. We also request that preferential consideration be given to Michigan owned and operated businesses within the spirit and strategic positioning of the State's Pure Michigan campaign.

The members, stakeholders and Board of Directors of Michigan Compassion would like to express our gratitude to the House Judiciary Committee for consideration of our organization's position on Bills before you. We respect the democratic process and have faith that this Committee and the State Legislature have the wisdom to make careful deliberations on the Bills before you.

Sincerely,

Michigan Compassion's
Board of Directors